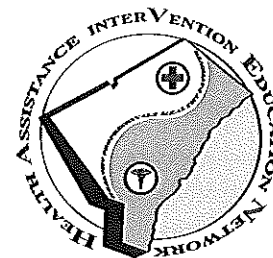


# HAVEN

Health Assistance InterVention Education Network



Legislative Testimony  
Joint Committee on Insurance and Real Estate

Bill No. 21

An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage of Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Analgesics

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, Senator Hartley, Representative Zoni, Senator Kelly, Representative Sampson and members of the Joint Committee on Insurance and Real Estate, my name is Maureen Sullivan Dinnan. I am the executive director of the Health Assistance interVention Education Network for Connecticut Health Professionals, which was created in 2007 following the passage of Connecticut General Statute Section 19a-12a. HAVEN is the assistance program for healthcare professionals facing the challenges of physical illness, mental illness, chemical dependence, or emotional disorder. I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony in support of Bill No. 21, An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage of Abuse-Deterrent Opioid Analgesics.

Substance use disorders have been increasingly recognized as an illness which takes a tremendous toll on the individual, the family, and society. By 2002, the economic cost of drug abuse in the United States was estimated to be \$180.8 billion dollars.<sup>1</sup> Few would dispute that drug abuse, including prescription drug abuse, is a public health epidemic.

Healthcare professionals suffer from substance use disorders at the same rate as the general population. It is accepted that 10 to 15 % of the population will suffer from substance use disorders. The illness knows no age, education, race, or other boundary. It is important that our lawmakers set forth safeguards to help us as a society deal with this illness.

Individuals have legitimate needs for opioid analgesics. This bill enables patients of the State of Connecticut to have access to pain medications which are safer and less likely to contribute to the prescription drug abuse crisis. Patients who have a history of substance use disorder, a family history of substance use disorder, or a family member with a substance use disorder in his or her household should not be forced to have nonabuse-deterrent opioid analgesics because their health insurance policy will not cover the abuse-deterrent medication.

The majority of persons age 12 years and older who have used opioid analgesics for nonmedical purposes are reported to obtain them for free or to buy them from family or friends. Our home medicine cabinets are the primary source. This bill will help keep such medications out of our medicine cabinets.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy, "The Economic Cost of Drug Abuse in the United States in 1992-2002" Section IV

Addiction to opioids including prescribed opioids such as Percocet and illegal opioids such as heroin requires that our medical community have all available tools to help fight this illness which destroys lives, families, and communities. This Bill is an important step in a solution-oriented direction to the opioid drug problem in our state.

I would like to again thank the Committee for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of HAVEN, the health assistance program for Connecticut health professionals. Should you have any questions we would be happy to make ourselves available at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maureen Sullivan Dinnan', written in a cursive style.

Maureen Sullivan Dinnan, J.D.  
Executive Director  
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